Justice
Health and Community Services
June 26, 2008

Province Recognizes International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking

Fighting the drug trade in Newfoundland and Labrador is a priority for the Provincial Government, said the Honourable Jerome Kennedy, Minister of Justice and Attorney General, today as he acknowledged June 26 as International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. This day was declared in 1987 by the General Assembly of the United Nations in order to raise awareness, increase action and encourage cooperation for the goal of an international society free of drugs. This year's slogan is "Do drugs control your life? Your life. Your Community. No place for drugs."

The Provincial Government, along with the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary (RNC) and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), has made significant strides in the fight against drugs in Newfoundland and Labrador.

"Recently, the RNC made the most significant drug bust ever for the force and it is evident our investments are paying off," said Minister Kennedy. "Our government has increased funding for both police forces. Fighting the spread of illicit drugs throughout our province is of critical importance and we are committed to this fight and to keeping such substances out of our communities."

Budget 2008 included over $700,000 to add seven additional officers to the RNC drug unit, including a canine unit dedicated to drug enforcement. The RCMP also received significant funding in Budget 2008 to prevent the drug trade in Labrador. Over $200,000 was allocated for two constables to serve the Labrador region, an investment which was identified and supported by leaders of the Innu Nation and the Nunatsiavut Government. As well, Budget 2008 increased the annual budget for mental health and addictions by $1.7 million. In addition, consultations are underway to help develop a provincial substance use strategy aimed at preventing and treating problematic substance use, including prescription drugs and alcohol.

"Problematic substance use is one of the greatest social challenges of our time and affects communities across the globe," said the Honourable Ross Wiseman, Minister of Health and Community Services. "Our government has taken a strategic and collaborative approach to addressing problematic substance use and to strengthening resources for persons struggling with drug addictions in our province. The current development of a provincial substance use strategy will help us build on our successes and continue to effectively target problematic substance use in Newfoundland and Labrador."

"There is no doubt that the investments of the Provincial Government in recent years have increased the capacity of the RNC to combat the drug trade," said RNC Chief of Police Joe Browne. "Our officers have had much success in removing drug dealers and illicit drugs from our communities and we will continue to do so."

- 30 -

Media contacts:

Ken Morrissey
Director of Communications
Department of Justice
709-729-9685, 685-6612
kenmorrissey@gov.nl.ca

Glenda Power
Director of Communications
Department of Health and Community Services
709-729-1377, 685-1741
glendapower@gov.nl.ca